

VZCZCXRO2373
OO RUEHBI
DE RUEHLM #0477 0811212
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 221212Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5730
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0563
RUEHG/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1921
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0297
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI 0203
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6963
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 5041
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 3624
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0785
RUEHN/AMEMBASSY OSLO 3710
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA 1025
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0334
RUEHK/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2790
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 7538
RUEHB/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 5240
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 0150
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000477

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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STATE ALSO PASS TO USAID
AID/W PLEASE PASS USAID/OFDA, USAID/ANE, USAID/CMM
KATHMANDU FOR OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR WILLIAM BERGER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREF PREL AORC CE
SUBJECT: FORCED RESETTLEMENT CONTINUES; UNHCR DISSOCIATES
ITSELF FROM TRANSPORT PROCESS IN PROTEST

REF: COLOMBO 439

¶1. (SBU) UNHCR Representative Amin Awad informed Ambassador on March 22 that UNHCR had formally disassociated itself from all resettlement efforts in the east because of continued forcible resettlement of internally displaced people by the government. Awad said that even after the somewhat tense meeting that he and the Ambassador had with Sri Lanka's Defense Secretary and Minister for Disaster Management and Human Rights on March 16 (reftel), forced resettlement by the government of IDPs in the east had continued. In addition to the 4,000 IDPs resettled in Vakarai, some of them forcibly, an additional 5,000 to 6,000 had been resettled since then in areas near Trincomalee, many of them forcibly, according to Awad. In such circumstances, UNHCR had no choice but to disassociate itself from the transport part of the resettlement effort since it was not being conducted in accordance with international standards. He assured Ambassador, however, that the UNHCR would remain fully engaged providing shelter and other services to IDPs in the east. The Ambassador suggested that high-level UN officials convey the UN's unhappiness with continued forced resettlement to senior government officials. Awad confirmed that he had urged senior UN officials in Geneva to make a representation to Minister Samarasinghe who is currently in Geneva for the UN Human Rights Council meetings.

¶2. (SBU) Awad also expressed concern that once again the international community was being asked to support a humanitarian crisis that was mostly the result of the Sri Lanka's military's ongoing campaign to remove the LTTE from remaining pockets of eastern Sri Lanka. He said there was a growing concern within UN organizations in Sri Lanka that the Sri Lankan government was now calling on UN agencies supported by international donors to fund all of the relief services for these newly displaced IDPs and a consensus that

the government should fund at least 50% of these activities. He said that UN Resident Coordinator Lyons and he planned to make a representation to the Foreign Minister on burden-sharing and on the forced resettlement issue prior to making a fresh appeal for funds from donors under the common humanitarian appeal.

¶3. (SBU) Ambassador has placed a call to the Foreign Minister to register the importance of stopping forcible resettlement and to warn him that continued forcible resettlement could jeopardize future donor support for these IDPs, forcing the Government to take on most or all of the burden.

BLAKE